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CHILD CARE

IN

INSTITUTIONS

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BUREAU OF CHILDREN

DEPARTMENT OF WELFARE

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

LETTER OF TRANSMISSION

May 1, 1924.

Dr. Ellen C. Potter,
Secretary of Welfare,
Harrisburg, Penna.

My dear Dr. Potter:—

It has proved difficult to find a handbook which deals concretely with the problems that confront workers in children's institutions. The Bureau of Children has deemed it advisable, therefore, to provide a pamphlet in which is briefly discussed some of the most common problems.

The manuscript of this pamphlet was first submitted to Dr. Ludwig Bernstein of Pittsburgh, Mr. C. C. Carstens of New York, Miss Emma O. Lundberg, Washington, D. C. and Rev. Bryan J. McEntegert of New York, and their constructive criticisms are herewith gratefully acknowledged.

Sincerely yours,

MARY S. LABAREE,

Director,

Bureau of Children.

FOREWORD

Inquiries concerning institutional management, the construction of new homes for children or the remodelling of old ones, come so frequently to the Bureau of Children that it is evident that there is need for some sort of handbook of advice. Since the Bureau is in touch with numerous child welfare agencies both in this State and elsewhere it has available much information as to progressive and successful methods. Part of this accumulation which is of great importance is the knowledge as to where certain facts may be obtained.

For the benefit, therefore, of those who are doing institutional work for dependent or delinquent children, or who are contemplating undertaking it, this outline of suggestions has been prepared. Its chief value will undoubtedly be that it presents the names and addresses of those who know the various institution problems at first-hand and can speak of them authoritatively out of their own successful experience.

Other inquiries concerning the administration of children's homes and admission policies are also frequently received. It has, consequently, seemed wise to include in this pamphlet a discussion of several practical problems of institutional management.

Since it answers from practical experience many of the questions arising in child caring institutions we are fortunate to be able to include in this study a paper read by Miss Edith Dallas, President of the House of the Holy Child, Philadelphia, at a meeting of the Division of Child Caring Agencies, of the Philadelphia Council of Social Agencies.

CHILD CARE IN INSTITUTIONS

PART I.

I. BEFORE BUILDING

1. Determine the Need.

Before organizing or building a new children's home or enlarging one already built, *study the problem:*— Is an institution really needed? If so, how large must it be? It is a mistake to invest large sums of money in a charitable enterprise without first testing the soundness of such an investment.

No factory or business enterprise is started on surmises or impressions or mere opinions as to the cost involved, the markets and outlets available and the type of territory to be served. *Facts* must provide the basis for any new commercial enterprise. Neither is a church or school built without first obtaining accurate information as to the community's need for such an organization, the size of building required and the probability of future development.

So no children's home should be undertaken without a preliminary study, first, of the needs of dependent children and provisions for them in the State at large; second, of the needs of the locality to be served; and third, as to the community resources for the care of children in their own or foster homes, such as Mother's Assistance Fund boards, family welfare agencies and child placing societies.

Above all no group of persons should decide to build a children's institution without informing themselves as to the trend of modern child care which is more and more away from institutional care and towards family home care both for dependent and delinquent children. It is not strange that new developments in child welfare methods are superseding old methods, for in every phase of life we are meeting our problems differently from the way our fathers met them fifty years ago.

You will want, therefore, to get first-hand information from those who have tried out this method of preliminary study of the field before definitely deciding to build.

2. Choose Consultants.

Miss H. Ida Curry, State Charities Aid Association, 105 East Twenty-second Street, New York City, can tell you of the experience of persons in Newburgh, New York and Suffolk County, New York, who undertook a survey of their needs before rebuilding their children's homes and reorganized their plans as a result of the study.

The Jewish Bureau of Social Research, 114 Fifth Avenue, New York City, has also enlightening information that was secured in a recent survey of several Jewish institutions in and near New York City.

In the Roman Catholic group you will get help from Brother Barnabas, Vice-President of the Canadian Child Welfare Council, 575 Jarvis Street, Toronto, Canada, who has made at least three studies for institutional workers covering the admission of children to institutions.

Pennsylvania has two interesting experiments of which you will wish to know. In 1922 the Bradford County Commissioners considered building a large children's home but they first employed for several months, a trained children's worker to study their needs. As a result of her work an institution much smaller than the one originally contemplated has been found to suffice. The clerk of the Bradford County Commissioners, Court House, Towanda, Pennsylvania, will be glad to give you the Board's opinion of their action.

In Harrisburg plans are under way (1924) for the merging of two homes for children but before planning the new institution a special worker has been engaged to study the population of the two homes. By re-investigating the case of each child under care and by making an individual plan for him it has been learned that many may be provided for outside of the institution and the size of the new building is thus being determined. Write for information to the Director of the Harrisburg Welfare Federation, Second and South Streets, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Some institutions have gone even farther than having preliminary studies of their needs. They have enlarged their sphere of influence and keep families together by supporting children in their own homes, paying for it out of the institution's treasury. To do this they have permanently on their staff trained social workers who make the necessary investigations and supervise very carefully the children thus cared for.

One such organization is the John Edgar Thomson School, 1722 Rittenhouse Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Another is the Thomasville Baptist Orphanage, Thomasville, North Carolina.

A word should be said here concerning the White Williams Foundation of Philadelphia.

For a century this organization had been known as the Magdalen Society and had conducted a rescue home for women. Recognizing that other agencies were covering this field the trustees made a study of the city's conditions that were causing delinquency with the result that they decided to reorganize their policy and put their emphasis on prevention. The story of this reorganization and of the service the new society is rendering is one af the most inspiring chapters in the history of social work.

If you want to know more of it write to Miss Anna B. Pratt, White Williams Foundation, 1022 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

II. PLANNING THE INSTITUTION

1. Visit Institutions.

Visit institutions before drawing up your plans. Here are places in Pennsylvania or in neighboring states that it will repay you to visit:—

Bethesda Christian Home, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pa.
Carson College, Flourtown, Montgomery County, Pa.
Elmwood School for Boys, North Springfield, Erie County, Pa.
Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society, Pleasantville, New York.
New York Orphanage, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York.
Sleighton Farm, Darlington, Delaware County, Pa.
Thern Hill School, Warrendale, Allegheny County, Pa.
Lincoln Agricultural School, Lincolndale, New York.

When you have finally decided to build a home there are certain matters to take under consideration.

Give due thought to the question of *congregate vs. cottage plan.*

The small cottage unit is finding increasing favor with child welfare workers since the present aim of all work for children is to provide dependent children with a home which in all its appointments and operations resembles as nearly as possible a normal family home. For this reason you will probably regret it in years to come if you put up now a big congregate building which may become obsolete.

However, in remodelling congregate institutions already built there are possibilities of introducing the "group system" of housing and administration of which you should know. The National Conference of Catholic Charities has had a committee working on this method of care and the Program for Catholic Child Caring Homes which is a result of this committee's work is very suggestive. Copies of this program may be secured from the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.

2. Consult Experts.

Do more than visit institutions, *consult experts* who have been handling institutional problems for years and are in touch with children's work all over the United States and Canada.

Some of these experts are:— Miss Emma O. Lundberg, Federal Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C.; Dr. Hastings H. Hart, Russell Sage Foundation, 130 East Twenty-second Street, New York City; Rev. Bryan McEntegart, Catholic Charities, 114 East Forty-seventh Street, New York City; Mr. Henry C. Wright, Director, Hospital and Institutional Bureau of Consultation, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York City; Mr. C. C. Carstens, Child Welfare League of America, 130 East Twenty-second Street, New York City.

3. Adopt Standards.

Familiarize yourself with standards for institutional work that have been adopted as requirements for membership in the Child Welfare League of America, and especially those promulgated by the various State Departments of Welfare (principally Georgia, Ohio, Missouri and Minnesota).

4. The Architect.

Be sure to choose a good architect who will not be so absorbed in building a monument to himself that he will forget the practical needs of a child's life.

5. The Site.

Ask yourself these questions before building:—

Is the site ideal? Is it adequate in size? What is the soil? The drainage? Is there ample play space? Is the water supply adequate and pure? How accessible is the site to community resources such as schools, churches, physicians and hospitals? Is it sufficiently suburban to give free outdoor life, with room for gardens and the keeping of pets, yet near enough to town so that the children and the staff may participate in community activities?

6. The Type of Construction and Furnishings.

What kind of buildings are most practical? Are one-story frame buildings economical and desirable? For the hard usage institutions receive are brick or stone more durable and more inexpensive because of the ultimate reduction in the cost of upkeep? Is not semi-fireproof construction (especially for two-story cottages) safe yet less expensive than full fireproof construction? Since we are trying to approximate family life for our children is not the bedroom

system for each child, or for not more than three children, better than dormitories or "cubicles"? Are long oilcloth covered tables to be installed or are the small tables with tablecloths more homelike and therefore desirable? How may each child be provided with a place for his own clothing and for the other little possessions so dear to his heart? How many toilets and baths should be allowed for the population? What labor-saving devices can be introduced to increase efficiency?

III. THE STAFF

1. Selection.

The chief responsibilities of the Board should be the formulation of policies, the securing of adequate financial support and *the selection of a staff,* the most serious of which is the choosing the staff.

Early in your program, perhaps before you even plan your building, you should choose your superintendent. No one who does not love and understand children should be employed in a children's home. Children deprived of the care of their own parents must have the most intelligent substitute for real parents that can be found.

The position of superintendent calls not only for one who knows and understands a child's mind but for a good administrator, one who is familiar with modern ideas as to health supervision, nutrition, and training for citizenship. After selecting the best available executive the Board members should delegate the details of management to him.

2. Organization.

The choice of the staff should be left in the hands of the superintendent. Failure to do this often results in divided authority within the institution which prevents real team play. If necessary the Board might reserve the right to confirm or disapprove the superintendent's choice by formal vote. Pay good salaries and attract to the various positions capable, worthwhile workers, who, however, are more interested in the opportunity for service offered than in the salary paid. It is poorer economy to use cheap workers than it is to use cheap plumbing.

Some institutions find difficulty in getting a staff that works harmoniously together. This is sometimes due to a feeling on the part of certain types of workers that they are "better" than others, i. e. an assistant matron may look down upon a cook, etc. This may frequently be obviated by dispensing with old-fashioned organization and using instead a departmental system. Thus a cook would be the

"head of the culinary department" and the laundress would be the "head of the laundry department." A little understanding of human nature coupled with executive ability can be very useful in handling a staff.

IV. ADMINISTRATION PROBLEMS

1. Intake and Outgo.

It is vitally important to have full knowledge of a child's family history before determining whether he is a proper subject for institutional care. Moreover, if he is accepted, intelligent training suited to his special needs cannot be given him without an understanding of his physical and mental condition, of what his home life has been, and what traits of character he has inherited. This requires a careful investigation of the family background, not only to discover weak spots in his environment and heredity but the sources of strength on which we may build hopefully. Illustrations of what good investigations may accomplish are contained in the second part of this pamphlet.

If children remain under care for a long time it is desirable to renew inquiries into their family circumstances at regular intervals in order to learn whether conditions in their homes have changed enough to permit of their discharge from the institution. A thorough knowledge of conditions at the time of admission is excellent but it does not necessarily follow that the same conditions will continue indefinitely; parents may remarry and reestablish a home, older brothers or sisters may become able to shoulder the responsibility of the younger members of the family, or other relatives, who were not in a position to accept the care of the children when they first became dependent, may find themselves later able to do so. On the other hand some home conditions may so degenerate that all thought of ever returning the child to his people should be abandoned.

Some states require that the circumstances of every child supported at charitable expense in institutions be reinvestigated annually. It is a good idea. Searching inquiry should also precede discharge from the institution in order to safeguard the child's welfare.

A careful individual plan is required if the time, money, and spiritual effort invested in the training of a child is not to be wasted. Letting him go back to unsuitable home conditions may undo the work of years.

It is most desirable, therefore, that children's institutions have some means of investigating applications for admission and for the supervision of children who pass from care in the home. There are several ways of doing this:—

1. By having a social worker on whole or part time attached to the staff as do Carson College, Flourtown, Pa.; the House of the Holy Child, Philadelphia, Pa.; the Church Home for Children, Philadelphia, Pa.; and the John Edgar Thomson School, Philadelphia, Pa.

2. By having several institutions employ such a worker jointly.

3. By using the agencies available in various sections of the State which are already equipped to make social investigations and do after care work. These agencies are in some places the Associated Charities or Family Welfare Leagues but in other large centers specialized children's agencies exist. In Pittsburgh the Children's Service Bureau is doing this work for several institutions; in Philadelphia and Cleveland Children's Bureaus are handling the work. Various church groups may rely on their district organizations.

Unless a children's home is able to have its own worker every effort should be made to utilize the social resources of the State. A list of Pennsylvania children's agencies may be found in the Directory of Child Caring Societies, issued by the Department of Welfare, which may be had on application to the Department at Harrisburg. Names of family social work societies in the United States and Canada may be secured by sending fifty cents to the American Association for Organizing Family Social Work, 130 East Twenty-second Street, New York City, while children's organizations in the United States and Canada will be found listed in the Directory of Members of the Child Welfare League of America which may be purchased for twenty-five cents from that League at 130 East Twenty-second Street, New York City.

2. Records.

Records are all important and just as surely as you provide an adequate bookkeeping system for money received so ought you to have an accurate accounting system for your children. An individual record for each child with a record of his physical and mental development is an essential of good institutional service to children.

Record forms may be obtained at cost from the Child Welfare League of America, 130 East Twenty-second Street, New York City, or without charge from the Department of Welfare, Bureau of Children, Harrisburg, Pa.

3. Health Supervision.

The problems of child care are only just begun when the children have been received. *Adequate and regular medical supervision dental care, and mental examinations* are all parts of the program of a progressive children's organization. Only by having a thorough knowledge of a child's individual physical needs can we give him in-

telligent care and build him up in body. Moreover, a careful study of his mental capacity will enable us to give him the kind of education and special training that will best fit him for life outside of the institution. Therefore, it is most desirable that institutions be located where the best medical facilities are available. If institutions are already established, all community resources, such as clinics and high grade physicians, should be utilized to the utmost. Where they are inadequate or lacking a campaign for better medical provision should be waged. Call on the State Department of Health (Harrisburg) for advice in your health problems.

4. Education.

How to avoid institutionalizing the children is a very real problem. One of the best methods of giving them normal social contacts is by using the public or parochial schools. Mingling with children of the community rather than associating always with other dependents like themselves is a good thing. This is not always possible especially where the population of an institution of school age would swamp a township school. Some homes have solved this problem by building a school house on their own property and offering it to the school district for the use of the community. The district then becomes responsible for the employment and supervision of the teachers.

If not this plan, at least some other plan should be worked out so that institutional children may have the benefit of contacts in school with those not immediately connected with the institution.

Vocational training is also very desirable. This does not mean merely learning to help on the farm or in the housework but the development of a practical program of training that will help the child to decide what occupation he wishes to enter when he returns to the outside community.

One of the greatest problems institutional workers meet is the question of dealing with the mentally subnormal and defective who are often found in a home for dependent, neglected and delinquent children. No child, of course, should be classified as mentally deficient unless a competent psychologist has examined him. Mental clinics are now conducted in thirty centers throughout the State. If there is no such clinic near you consult the Bureau of Mental Health, Department of Welfare, Harrisburg, as to how you may have mental tests made.

When you have an accurately classified group who are below normal mentally and for whom special training is advised by a psychologist, some arrangement for the reorganization of the school work will be necessary. It is so unfair to the dull child to expect him to cover the same ground that his brighter companions do that

special classes for the slower ones are essential. The Bureau of Special Education, Department of Public Instruction, Harrisburg, should be consulted when planning the education of the backward child.

5. Outside Contacts.

Not only are contacts through the school desirable but every opportunity for letting the children of an institution mingle in the normal life of the community should be encouraged. There is danger lest an institutional child should feel "different" from other children and, therefore, every effort must be made to break down the barriers between him and the rest of the world.

Attendance at the city or village church and Sunday school, membership in community Boy and Girl Scout troops, or in Y. M. C. A., or Y. W. C. A., or other young people's organizations are valuable.

Not only should there be a definite plan for such outside contacts but a practical program for the wise use of the children's leisure time within the home should be a part of the program. Turning the children loose for free play either on the playground or in the playroom has its part in a recreational plan but there should be organized activities as well, preferably under leaders "imported" from the outside world. Hikes, team games for both boys and girls, indoor tournaments, plays, group sings, parties that one group gives for another should all be factors of the institution's life.

V. GENERAL POLICIES

Finally, *have a flexible program.* Be willing to change your policies with the changing times. Grasp at every opportunity for the improvement of your equipment, of your educational and recreational programs, of your health supervision, and of your understanding of the individual child, which modern science or modern psychology can give you.

Visit other institutions as often as possible. Attend conferences on all phases of social work. Read social work magazines, if for no other reason than that you may keep in touch with books and articles being published that may shed light on your particular problems.

VI. SUMMARY OF CONSULTANTS

Administration Problems:—Mr. Henry C. Wright, Director, Hospital and Institutional Bureau of Consultation, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York City; Miss Mary Irene Atkinson, Child Welfare League

of America, 130 East Twenty-second Street, New York City; Dr. Hastings H. Hart, Russell Sage Foundation, 130 East Twenty-second Street, New York City; Rev. C. H. LeBlond, Director of Charities, Diocese of Cleveland, 303 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio; the Bureau of Children, Department of Welfare, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Health Problems—Secretary, State Department of Health, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, concerning contagious diseases, health clinics and State dispensaries, infant care and pre-school children.

Superintendent of Public Instruction, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, concerning health education, diets and markets.

School Problems:—Superintendent of Public Instruction, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, concerning general information on educational work, problems of mentally retarded and otherwise handicapped children, vocational training, reference books and children's reading.

Recreation:—Federal Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C.; Mr. R. K. Atkinson, Russell Sage Foundation, 130 East Twenty-second Street, New York City.

Behavior Problems or Problems of the Individual Child:—Dr. William C. Sandy, Bureau of Mental Health, Department of Welfare, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Dr. Alfred C. Ostheimer, Public Charities Association, 311 South Juniper Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Dr. Jessie Taft, Child Study Department, Pennsylvania Children's Aid Society, 311 South Juniper Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

PART II.
KNOWING OUR CHILDREN

How much do we really know about the children under our care?

Are we certain that we are not relieving parents and relatives of a responsibility that should be theirs?

Do we know that our institution is caring only for children who cannot be cared for in any other way?

As it is coming to be more and more of a recognized fact that there are many children in institutions whom it would not have been necessary to accept if a really thorough study of their needs had been made, the importance of a careful investigation before admission cannot be overemphasized.

The modern idea of child care is that a child rightfully belongs first in his own home, then with blood relatives and only as a last resort should he be permanently separated from his own kin and placed in an institution or foster home. In some instances a child's best interests are served by placing him away from his own parents or kin, at least temporarily, but in many cases suitable relatives may be found if an earnest effort is made to locate them.

The progressive institution is coming to realize that, at its best, it can never make up to a child what he loses by being deprived of normal life in a family home (be it ever so humble), and of normal associations with other boys and girls in the community. Small cottage units, public school education, membership in church clubs, scout troops, etc. are being established by thoughtful institutional workers in an effort to supply a more nearly normal family home life. An institution may be able to offer better educational opportunities than a child may have in his own home but even so these advantages cannot compare with the personal affection and interest a child receives as an individual member of a family circle. Children need fathers and mothers; they need family ties and like to know that they really belong to some one.

However, if a careful investigation proves that institutional care is the best plan, the information gathered will be of great value in understanding the child and in knowing how to meet the problems which arise in his daily life. Suppose, in addition to the meagre facts that Johnnie Jones has a lazy, non-supporting father and a careless, indifferent mother we should learn through careful inquiry that he has never known anything but drunkenness, abuse and immorality, but that his father came from honest, industrious folks whose chief fault was to spoil their only son. Consequently Johnnie's father never had to assume any responsibility and lacked the courage and moral ability to stick to a job. Suppose we also learned that Johnnie's mother came from a good home where she had been well trained. As she had taken no great interest in High School she had

worked faithfully in a factory but after her marriage became so discouraged and resentful, because of ill health and her husband's abuse, that she lost interest in her home and family. With all these facts would we not be in a position to see Johnnie himself in a different light and to deal with him more understandingly?

What is an investigation?

Investigation must not be thought of as useless red tape. It must be considered a careful study of the whole family situation in order that the best possible plan for the future welfare of the child may be made. To secure this information it is *not* necessary to do a disagreeable piece of detective work expecting to find out unpleasant facts about a family; instead one may learn the facts in a friendly, sympathetic spirit that will be most useful in understanding the family and helping them out of their difficulties. It is only when we know the facts regarding his heredity, early training, school record, associates, etc., that we can deal with a child as an individual.

Some of the facts we should know about a child before admission are:—

A—Name — Address
Sex — Religion
Date of birth — Place of birth

B—Physical and mental history as far as possible.

C—Disposition — Characteristics
Interests — Likes and dislikes
Education — School grade

As to the child's parents we should know:—

A—Full name — Last known address
Date of birth — Place of birth
Religion — Church connections
Occupation — Wages
Physical condition — Mental condition
Jail or institutional record
Date of marriage — Place of marriage
(If dead—date and cause of death)

B—We should also secure a clear picture of the homes in which the parents grew up. Their character, home training, mode of living, health, habits, education, personality and mental capacity, are all factors which influence the way the children are brought up and in a large measure determine the type of child for whom we must make a plan.

It is also desirable to have the names and addresses of maternal and paternal grandparents; names and addresses of as many relatives as possible and name and address of pastor and family physician.

Most of this information can be secured only from people who know the child and family best; therefore we must consult with relatives, pastor, physician, former employers, friends and neighbors as well as other social agencies or institutions that may have known the family.

Why is all this necessary? Many times a child has been placed in an institution when it would have been possible to secure a good home with relatives if they had only been consulted. At any rate, relatives can give many interesting facts regarding the child and his family which cannot be secured from any other source.

The family physician is often the next best source of information and can tell us much about the health of the members of the family. If, for instance, we know that there is a history of tuberculosis in a family, we shall be able to give a child special care and attention and safeguard him from a development of the disease.

Why mental examinations?

If possible a mental examination of the child should be made in order to determine the child's mental capacity, not just to find out if he is feeble-minded. If we know that a child has particular ability along manual lines, we may plan to give him the sort of training for which he is best suited, while if we find an exceptionally bright child we may plan to give him every opportunity for higher education.

Records.

This information is of little value if it is not permanently recorded. It is not fair to the dependent child to have practically all that is known about him "carried in the head" of some worker connected with the organization. Tragic stories of parents looking for their children, children looking for parents, or of brothers and sisters seeking each other after years of separation, are altogether too numerous. (This information can be conveniently recorded on an individual record form which is supplied free by the Department of Welfare).

If we are to maintain and preserve family life and be assured that we are caring for only such children as really need institutional care we should feel obligated to make a careful study of home conditions of every child before he is accepted.

The following stories are actual cases reported by child caring organizations which point out the kind of information that should be

secured before a definite plan for a child is made. Many details are necessarily omitted and the stories condensed because of lack of space. Names and other identifying information have been changed so that the confidential nature of the stories may be preserved.

FINDING THE RIGHT INSTITUTION

Margaret, aged thirteen, was referred by a Juvenile Court to a children's home as a suitable child to be admitted to that institution. The Court's record stated briefly that her parents were separated, and that her home influence had been bad; she had previously been cared for away from her home and had been for a short time in the care of a child-placing agency. Later, however, her home had been reestablished and she had returned to her parents.

The institution felt that more information concerning the child was needed before she could be accepted and an investigation was requested from a cooperating children's society. It was learned that Margaret's family had been known to several welfare agencies and from consultation of their records and from some independent inquiries made by the investigators the following facts were gathered:—

The maternal grandparents had been divorced and their daughter (Margaret's mother) had been left much alone when a child as her mother had been obliged to go to work. As a result she had received very little home training. She had grown up to be a coarse, slovenly person who had had three illegitimate children, having lived with her present husband one year before marrying him.

Margaret's father had always been a shiftless fellow. His mother died when he was eight years old and he grew up without any supervision. He drank, stole, robbed and worked on the railroad under seven different names. His father had served two prison sentences and his mother had also been in prison once for operating a "speakeasy".

Consequently Margaret herself had grown up in a home where she knew nothing but quarreling, drunkenness, abuse and immorality. Her parents had often separated and come together again but each time matters grew worse, even though the father's business had prospered to such an extent that he owned two houses and an automobile. Margaret's older sister, as might have been expected, became incorrigible and was sent away to a correctional school, but after her marriage it was reported that she settled down and became a good wife and housekeeper.

Inquiries were made at Margaret's school where her teacher reported her to be a nervous, troublesome girl, doing poor work in school. She completely demoralized the class because of her conduct and the obscene stories that she told.

In view of the facts that this investigation brought out the institution managers felt that Margaret would have an undesirable influence over the other children in the home and the Court was asked to commit her to an industrial school which was better equipped to handle this sort of a behavior problem.

WHAT A MENTAL EXAMINATION ACCOMPLISHED

Mrs. Atkins applied to a children's society for the admission of her ten year old daughter, Ruth, to a children's institution. She said that Ruth had been expelled from school because of bad personal habits and that it was impossible to care for her at home as Mrs. Atkins went out to work.

In addition to getting the woman's own story the society made other inquiries and much information concerning the situation resulted. The mother, a rather ignorant type, had gone to work at an early age as errand girl and she had always been permitted to spend her earnings for her clothes. There had been developed in her no sense of family responsibility. She married a superior sort of man, the son of a minister, and for several years the marriage seemed happy. Suddenly, without any apparent cause, the man's attitude towards his family changed, he neglected them and finally deserted, returning to his own people in another state. A possible reason for his peculiar behavior is suggested by the fact that he later died of a tumor on the brain.

After the father's desertion Ruth went to live with her father's brother in a nearby city but after his death she returned to her mother. Mrs. Atkins was working all day and several hours each night and could not give Ruth proper care. The child ran wild, became a real behavior problem and finally developed bad sex habits.

In view of the nature of Ruth's reported misconduct a mental examination was given which showed that she was really a superior child, but restless, easily discouraged and very much spoiled. Her bad sex habits came from the fact that she had been misinformed about sex but a frank talk with the psychologist who examined her corrected her perverted ideas.

Her teacher was also seen and reported rather favorably that Ruth was a bright, clever child, fond of other children but not popular because she liked to "boss" them. The teacher felt that careful training would do much to overcome her faults.

Since the investigation showed that the mother had no living relatives and the father's people, when approached through a society in the city where they lived, refused to do anything for either the mother or Ruth arrangements were made to place the child in a home for girls, the mother to pay a small amount of board. This institution reports a marked change for the better in Ruth's behavior with a gradual elimination of the faults that had been so conspicuous.

A REUNITED FAMILY

Mrs. Jackson applied for the placement in a children's home of seven year old Dorothy and her brother, six year old Jack. She stated that her husband had died of tuberculosis several years before and that she was obliged to support herself and her children. Although she had had opportunities to place them before she had been unwilling to separate them and so had tried to struggle on by herself. She had found it impossible, however, any longer to give the children the care they needed. When questioned about her own history she stated that her early life had been in a small city in a distant state and that she had been obliged to go to work while quite young. Her marriage had been a happy one and everything had gone well until her husband died.

When the children were seen by the worker they both appeared strong and healthy and their teacher reported that they attended school regularly and were always neatly dressed and well behaved. A visit was paid to a paternal aunt in the same city but she proved to be both unwilling and unfit to care for Dorothy and Jack. A letter of inquiry was then sent to a children's society in the mother's home town and a social worker there interviewed the relatives who were distressed to learn of her situation. They had had no idea that Mrs. Jackson was in need and offered at once to help in any way in which they were able. The investigating agency reported that these relatives were of good character and that their offer to give the children a home should be accepted. The family gladly forwarded the money for the children's carfare and both the boy and girl are now happily established in their aunt's home. Mrs. Jackson hopes soon to join them and make her home permanently among her own people.

A FAMILY PROBLEM SOLVED

Mr. Miller brought his three little children—Arthur and Jane, twins of five, and Helen, three—to an institution asking for their admission. He showed a note of recommendation from a prominent citizen who stated that the case was urgent.

Mr. Miller said that his wife was insane and soon to be committed to a hospital for mental diseases so that there was no one to care for the children; that his early married life had been happy but that after the last child was born the mother had developed a serious mental disorder and was placed in a mental hospital. She had been discharged soon after but had never fully recovered. He said that she was unreasonable in her demands for luxuries which his small earnings could not provide and that he wanted the children placed for permanent care.

The children were temporarily received and through interviews with two of the mother's relatives, a family welfare agency and friends and neighbors, the following information was secured:—

The parents, apparently, had lived together happily, although the husband was always miserly. He made a good living at his trade but in his determination to get ahead his family had often been unnecessarily deprived of many comforts. The mother had never received proper medical care following the premature birth of her last child and her mental depression dated from that time. A short time before this incident Mr. Miller sold his business and home and moved to another city. Here he failed in business and all his savings were swept away. The mother, overwhelmed at this disaster, in a strange city where she had no friend to turn to for help, broke down and was sent to a hospital, but was soon discharged. The family later returned to their home town and the mother and children went to live with the mother's sister, Mr. Miller living elsewhere.

During the following year Mr. Miller made no effort to establish a home, claiming that his wife was in no condition to keep house. Two mental specialists refused to consider her commitment to a hospital, stating emphatically that what she needed was a cheerful home and a satisfying environment—in other words, a home for herself and children.

Finally, however, to please her husband Mrs. Miller voluntarily entered a hospital for the insane and Mr. Miller tried to place the children but was unsuccessful when the institution to which he applied for their care learned the real situation.

The mother again returned from the hospital and after a consultation among the relatives it was decided to try to force the father to provide for his family. The relatives denied shelter to the mother and children and when Mr. Miller failed to be moved by their plight they were taken in by a friend. It was at this point that he applied to the second institution for the care of his children.

When the investigator finally consulted a welfare agency, which had helped the family before, they gladly offered to undertake the keeping of the family together, to pay the rent and give other assistance if needed. This plan was carried out, Mr. Miller was prevented from shifting his responsibility, and the mother was able to have the thing she needed most to effect her complete recovery, a home of her own, in which she is befriended always by sympathetic, intelligent advisers.

WHERE RELATIVES FAILED

After Bob had been shifted from one relative's home to another with no one really wanting him, it seemed imperative that a permanent plan be made for his care. He was referred to an orphanage by

a church worker who had become interested in the child. The orphanage's Admission Committee accepted Bob temporarily until they could satisfy themselves that he was best cared for in their institution.

Through visits to several aunts and uncles on the mother's side and to the father's relatives as well, it was proved without a doubt that none of them could provide suitably for the boy. However, through talks with these various relatives and from an old record of a children's society enlightening information concerning Bob's family history and early life was obtained.

An illegitimate child, he had never been much with his own mother. She came of poor, hard-working people who had themselves been neglectful of their children. Little is known about Bob's father as he disappeared soon after refusing to marry the girl to whom he had been engaged and when Bob was nineteen months old his mother married another man. After deserting him and going to work again she went through a marriage ceremony with still another man who divorced her for immorality four years later.

At this time his mother placed Bob to board with a fine woman who cared for him for several years. All the constructive influences he ever had came during his life with this foster mother. Unfortunately she was killed in an accident just about the time that his own mother committed suicide.

Convinced that there was no prospect of a permanent home among his people Bob was definitely accepted by the orphanage.

PART III.

HOW ONE INSTITUTION MEETS ITS PROBLEMS

By

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The following suggestions for meeting the problems of a child caring organization are based upon the experiences gained from close contact with an institution for twenty-seven years. When the House of the Holy Child was opened protests were made against the foundation of another Home. Many persons had come to feel, and rightly, that there were other and perhaps better ways of providing for dependent children and that there were already too many institutions in Philadelphia, but we believed then and hope that it has been proved, that there is need for both the good foster home and the right kind of an institutional agency.

It would be an excellent plan for every Board of Managers to answer the question as to the function of its own institution fairly and squarely and then to give a satisfying reason for its existence. Of course, it is easy to answer that we are here to provide for needy and unfortunate children but let us add "in the best way" and that leads to the consideration as to the type of child we are equipped to help. Do not let us ever take a child because there is a vacant bed, but let us only take it because we believe that we can do better for it than anyone else can.

It is impossible for any one organization to deal with all kinds of children. It is far better to specialize and we have found that the following types respond the best to our care. Girls over twelve years of age who are "difficult", who are recognized as delinquents in the making, who are restless and dissatisfied, respond to group treatment and the discipline of a large family; we have found this an interesting and satisfactory type to deal with. We have had many good results in dealing with children who are in poor physical condition and need good food and plenty of fresh air.

There are many children needing short time care (probably the more "turnover" there is the better for the institution); but temporary cases can only be taken when there are enough beds to keep some open for emergencies. Under this class are the children whose mother must go to the hospital or where, it being necessary to break up a home, temporary care must be provided for the children until a permanent plan can be made.

Then there are the children whose mentality is doubtful. It is an illuminating test to take these children, give them the things that have been lacking, and at the end of the year see them come

up to the normal. Of course, these cases must be accepted with the proviso that if they do not improve they will be removed by the agency who placed them. Here is a case to illustrate this type: In 1914 we admitted Elmira, then four years of age. She was backward, underweight, and her appearance was very suggestive of poor mentalty. A year later she was given a mental examination and a tentative diagnosis was made of feeblemindedness but the Doctor recommended that we should keep her for two or three years and have her re-examined. In 1919 she was again examined and the verdict was "dull, perhaps borderline" but improved over first examination. Last year she began to show marked improvement, which was noticed in school as well as at home. A short time ago when the teacher was interviewed she made the surprising statement that Elmira was beginning to react well to responsibility and was particularly good in managing groups of children.

On the negative side it is safe to say that the normal, attractive little girl or boy, without family ties, should never be placed in an institution.

The proper fulfilment of the function of an institutional agency means the continued working out of the policies that give us the control of the situation. The chief factor in forming these policies should be the executive officer by whatever title she may be known. I suppose we will all agree that without expert advice, the average Board of Managers has neither the time, nor the experience nor the training to deal with the overwhelming task presented by this branch of Child-Welfare work, and if the Superintendent is qualified for her position she will be able to keep the Board members in touch with all the latest approved methods and supply them with any information they may desire or need. She must have the time to visit other agencies and attend worthwhile conferences, keep an open mind and be ready for suggestions and criticisms. Her responsibilities are great and her work never ending. The ideal situation is for her to live outside the center of activity, but if that is impracticable then she should be given comfortable quarters where she can have some measure of quiet. I have heard of an institution where the Superintendent's room is between the nursery and the workroom.

It is impossible for a headworker, no matter how efficient she may be, to succeed unless she has a sufficient number of helpers. We have a Social Worker who gives us half of her time. She has charge of all the applications, investigations, and records; attends court hearings; makes contacts with co-operating agencies; visits families of children in the Home, and keeps in touch with those who have been discharged. The Social Worker and the Superintendent attend all meetings of the Board and make monthly reports.

Our latest experiment, which seems to be working out well, is to divide the work of a matron between a housemother and a housekeeper, for the obvious reason that the duties conflict. It does not seem possible to take thought for the dinner and deal sympathetically at the same time with childish troubles. One or the other must suffer and it is generally the childish trouble. We want a housemother who can give her whole time and attention to the children. As our household contains a number of very small children and one or more infants we have a resident trained nurse who oversees the care of the babies and is in charge of the health of the household. She takes the children to the clinics whenever necessary, and sees that each child is examined by the dentist twice a year. This Spring, each one was given the Schick test.

It is important that meetings of the Superintendent and Staff should be held weekly when all matters pertaining to the children and the house can be freely discussed and opportunity given to benefit by exchange of opinion.

All that I have said so far may seem remote from actual contact with the children. In the entrance hall of our Home there is a picture of an angel tying the shoestrings of a small child and underneath is the quotation "A child must be cared for from its soul to its shoestrings." Surely a good motto for any home. Dr. Reeder says that the child in the institution should be given as nearly as possible what it would receive in a good private home and that we can measure up most things, even the equipment, by this standard.

Within reasonable limits our children are allowed the freedom of the house and freedom of intercourse with members of the Staff and all those connected with the institution; the house belongs to the children, and they use it all and it is not possible to visit the Home without seeing some of them. Each group of children has its own living room and each child her own receptacle for her private possessions. Special attention has been given to the furnishing of the dining room. Small tables are used and the whole aspect is cheerful and pleasant. Elasticity of the age requirement for admission has a good effect on the children. A baby in the house is a softening influence and is an educational factor as well.

Of the many things that have been tried to help and interest the children some have not succeeded, others we feel have been really valuable and worth continuing. Five or six years ago our Social Worker inaugurated the Question Box. This followed a conversation with one of the girls that showed the need for enlightenment on moral questions. The children are divided into groups classified according to age. Written, unsigned questions (designated either senior or junior) are placed in a locked receptacle which is easily accessible, and these are read aloud and frankly answered at each

meeting. The result of this Question Box has been gratifying and inspiring. The questions asked run the whole gamut from simple matters of daily conduct to the most sacred of Life's mysteries, and one of the most valuable effects is in the changed attitude of the girls towards such subjects. I do not know anything that we do for the children more far reaching in its consequence.

The twelve oldest girls have formed a Self-Government Club which is as yet in its infancy, but seems to promise well. On Saturday afternoons the children and members of the Staff meet together to talk over the points of interest in the past week and the coming events. The weekly allowance is paid at this time and a "candy shop" is in operation. The library is also open for an hour.

After many years of effort a close co-operation with the public school has been established. The school is visited once a month and a character estimate is given of each child by her teacher. This report is read to the children as well as to the Board of Managers. A record is also kept of the lesson reports. There is a supervised study hour every evening. Religious teaching is an important part of the training and is provided by the Church and Sunday School, and through home instruction.

Wholesome recreation is not always easy to provide. This is, by no means, an *institution* problem. Birthdays are celebrated by a monthly party for the children in that month. During the winter a dancing class is held every two weeks to which outside girls and boys are invited. Dramatic performances are encouraged and in vacation time a supervised play program is conducted out of doors.

In order to test the physical condition each child is weighed once a month and measured twice a year. Those below normal weight receive a special diet. Each child is given a thorough physical examination yearly and psychological tests are made where indicated. The menus are repeated every four weeks and are made up by a dietitian.

All members of the Staff, aided by the Board members, give a great deal of time to the study of each child, and not only are they studied, but they are loved and exhorted, and talked to, and their development watched with the deepest interest.

I mention all these activities not because *we* do them, but because in our experience they have been the things that seemed to help most in making the Institution function in some measure as it should.

One of the greatest helps or hindrances in any work is the character of its plant. The ideal for an institution is, of course, the Cottage Plan and we should all be looking forward to housing our children in this way. We, who are still in the city look with longing eyes to the green spaces of the country. The congestion of people and problems in the last few years seems to be actually pushing us out into the open.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

From the wealth of social work literature now available it is difficult to choose a short list of books which will be most helpful to institutional workers. The following eight books are selected, however, in the hope that they may furnish suggestions for further reading. Those which are starred (*) may be borrowed from the library of the Department of Welfare, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

(*) *Broken Homes* by Joanna Colcord, published by the Russell Sage Foundation, New York.

A study of family desertion and its social treatment. Contains many illustrations of what may be done to preserve and strengthen family relationships.

(*) *Children Astray* by Saul Drucker and Maurice Beck Hexter, published by the Harvard University Press.

Interesting studies, social and psychological, of children who were known to the head of a large orphanage.

(*) *Child Training* by Angelo Patri, published by D. Appleton and Company.

Thumb-nail sketches of child life that reveal some principles essential to intelligent dealing with children.

Daddy Long-Legs
Dear Enemy } by Jean Webster, published by the Century Company.

Two stories of life in an old-fashioned orphan asylum with many pertinent comments on the new ideas of child care.

(*) *Feeding the Family* by Mary Swartz Rose, published by MacMillan Company.

A guidebook to good nutrition. Contains helpful information concerning suitable diets for all ages.

(*) *Honesty* by Dr. William Healy, published by Bobbs-Merrill Company.

A study of the causes and treatment of dishonesty among children.

(*) *How Two Hundred Children Live and Learn* by Rudolph R. Reeder, Ph. D.

An inspiring account of life in a modern cottage-plan children's institution with practical suggestions on problems of child training.